

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding final Office Action mailed January 26, 2006. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and pending claims are respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. Rejection of Claims 1, 5, 7, 16, 18, 22-28, 31, and 32

Claims 1, 5, 7, 16, 18, 22-28, 31, and 32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowland, et al. (EP 0844767A1) in view of Jones, et al. ("Jones," U.S. Pat. No. 5,623,637). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As has been acknowledged by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO") has the burden under section 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness by showing some objective teaching in the prior art or generally available knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art that would lead that individual to the claimed invention. *See In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 1074, 5 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). The Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) section 2143 discusses the requirements of a *prima facie* case for obviousness. That section provides as follows:

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success.

Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure.

In the present case, the prior art at least does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. Applicant discusses the applied references and Applicant's claims in the following.

1. The Rowland Disclosure

Rowland discloses a user controlled browser. Rowland, Patent Title. More particularly, Rowland discloses a method and apparatus for providing user identification and transaction information to web sites in the process of getting access to the web sites. Rowland, column 1, lines 3-6. As is described by Rowland, a user attempts to access a web site. Rowland, column 6, lines 8-11. In response, the web site returns to the user's computer the site name and a request for user information. Rowland, column 6, lines 12-15.

An applet on the user's computer then determines whether an entry exists for the website name. Rowland, column 6, lines 18-22. If no entry exists, the applet requests of and receives from the user a limit level reflecting the level of information that is to be provided to the web site. Rowland, column 6, lines 22-35.

After the limit level is received, or if an entry already exists, the applet responds to the web site with information fields that pertain to the limit level associated with the particular web site. Rowland, column 6, lines 52-55.

2. Applicant's Claims

Applicant's claims describe methods and systems that are not anticipated or rendered obvious by Rowland or Jones. Applicant discusses the claims in the following.

(a) Claims 1, 5, 7, and 22-26

Applicant's independent claim 1 provides as follows (emphasis added):

1. A method for sharing user information, comprising:
receiving from a user an identification of a level of access that is to be extended to a web site host;
assigning a user code that is pertinent to the identified level of access;
providing the user code to the web site host when the user visits a web site maintained by the web site host;
receiving from the web site host a request for information concerning the user and the user code that was provided to the web site host;
determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host; and
transmitting user information to the web site host that pertains to the user code.

In the Office Action, the Examiner argues that Rowland teaches each of the various actions of claim 1, except for “a system wherein the browser receives an access code to determine the level of access,” which it is alleged is taught by Jones. Applicant notes again that this limitation is not contained in claim 1. Therefore, Applicant will treat the

Examiner's rejection as an argument that Rowland teaches each and every limitation of claim 1.

First, Rowland does not teach “*providing the user code to the web site host*” when the user visits a web site maintained by the web site host”. As is described above, web sites in the Rowland system only request information upon the user attempting to access the site and, in return, the *requested information*, not a user code, is provided to the web site by an applet executing on the user’ computer.

Second, Rowland does not teach “*receiving from the web site host* a request for information concerning the user and *the user code that was provided to the web site host*”. As is described above, no user code is provided to web sites in the Rowland system. As such, Rowland’s web site host does not, and cannot, provide a user code to any other system component. It logically follows that Rowland’s system does not “receive” a user code “from the web site host” as is required by claim 1.

Third, Rowland does not teach “determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized *from the user code received from the web site host*”. Again, no code is received from a web site host in Rowland’s system. It therefore logically follows that no level of access is “determined” from a user code “received from the web site host”.

Finally, Rowland does not teach “transmitting user information to the web site host that pertains to the user code”. Once again, Rowland’s web site host provides no user code, and no determination is made as to an access level based upon the received code. It therefore follows that the Rowland system does not transmit user information to the web site host “that pertains to the user code”.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Rowland does not, as is argued in the Office Action, teach each of Applicant's recited claim limitations. Moreover, Jones does not provide the missing teachings. Applicant therefore submits that claim 1, and its dependents, are allowable over the combination.

With specific regard to dependent claim 5, Applicant notes that neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests "comparing the user code *provided by the web site host* with a user code assigned to the user and relevant to a particular user information set". Again, Rowland's web site host provides no user code.

Regarding dependent claim 22, neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests "receiving selection of one of an *anonymous mode* in which only profile information and no personal information is provided, and a *full disclosure mode* in which profile information and personal information is provided". In response to the argument provided in the Office Action, there is no "line 66" in column 5 of the Rowland reference. Regardless, nothing in the Rowland disclosure mentions an "anonymous mode" or "full disclosure mode".

Regarding dependent claim 23, neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests "receiving user selection of a *category* of information to share". Rowland discusses no such "categories."

Regarding dependent claim 24, neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests any of a "personal category", a "business category", or a "financial category".

Regarding dependent claim 25, neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests "assigning a first code pertinent to an initial level of access to be provided to the web site host and a second code pertinent to a deeper level of access that can be manually provided

by the user if desired”. There simply is no support for the argument that Rowland teaches such an action. Applicant further notes that the Examiner has not identified any specific sections of the Rowland disclosure that teach that action.

(b) Claims 16 and 18

Independent claim 16 provides as follows (emphasis added):

16. A system for sharing user information, comprising:
means for assigning a user code that is pertinent to a level of access
selected by a user that is to be extended to a web site host;
*means for providing the user code to the web site host when the
user visits a web site maintained by the web site host;*
means for receiving the user code from the web site host;
*means for determining a level of access for which the web site
host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host;*
and
*means for transmitting user information to the web site host that
pertains to the user code.*

Neither Rowland nor Jones teach or suggest any of “means for providing the user code to the web site host when the user visits a web site maintained by the web site host”, “means for receiving the user code from the web site host”, “means for determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host”, or “means for transmitting user information to the web site host that pertains to the user code” for reasons described above in relation to claim 1. Applicant

therefore submits that claims 16 and 18 are allowable over the Rowland/Jones combination for at least these reasons.

With specific regard to dependent claim 18, Applicant notes that neither Rowland nor Jones teaches or suggests “means for comparing the user code *provided by the web site host* with a user code assigned to the user and relevant to a particular user information set” for reasons described above in relation to claim 5.

(c) Claims 27 and 28

Independent claim 27 provides as follows (emphasis added):

27. A method for sharing user information, comprising:

receiving at an e-service various user information that is to be distributed to web site hosts visited by the user, the user information separated into sets each associated with a given levels of access to user information;

assigning with the e-service a user code to each level of access and therefore each information set;

receiving at the e-service from the user an indication of a level of access that is to be granted to all web sites visited by the user;

receiving at the e-service a user code that has been provided to a web site host by the user;

determining with the e-service a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host;
and

transmitting from the e-service to the web site host user information that pertains to the user code received from the web site host.

As an initial matter, Applicant notes that the Examiner rejects claim 27 for the same reasons as claim 1. Applicant asserts that such a rejection is improper given that claim 27 is different from claim 1. The Examiner has simply ignored the limitations of claim 27, and therefore has failed to state a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Turning to the limitations of claim 27, neither Rowland nor Jones teach or suggest any of receiving at an “e-service” “user information that is to be distributed to web site hosts visited by the user” the user information “separated into sets each associated with a given levels of access to user information”, “assigning with the e-service a user code to each level of access and therefore each information set”, “receiving at the e-service from the user an indication of a level of access that is to be granted to all web sites visited by the user”, “receiving at the e-service a user code that has been provided to a web site host by the user”, “determining with the e-service a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host”, or “transmitting from the e-service to the web site host user information that pertains to the user code received from the web site host”. From the discussions above, it is clear that Rowland, which is treated by the Examiner as comprising all of those limitations, does not actually teach or suggest *any* of the limitations of claim 27. Applicant therefore requests that the rejection be withdrawn as to claim 27 and 28.

(d) Claims 31 and 32

Independent claim 31 provides as follows (emphasis added):

31. A system for sharing user information, comprising:

means for receiving at an e-service various user information that is to be distributed to web site hosts visited by the user, the user information separated into sets each associated with a given levels of access to user information;

means for assigning with the e-service a user code to each level of access and therefore each information set;

means for receiving at the e-service from the user an indication of a level of access that is to be granted to all web sites visited by the user;

means for receiving at the e-service a user code that has been provided to a web site host by the user;

means for determining with the e-service a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host; and

means for transmitting from the e-service to the web site host user information that pertains to the user code received from the web site host.

As an initial matter, Applicant notes that the Examiner rejects claim 31 for the same reasons as claim 1. Applicant asserts that such a rejection is improper given that claim 31 is different from claim 1. The Examiner has simply ignored the limitations of claim 31, and therefore has failed to state a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Turning to the limitations of claim 31, neither Rowland nor Jones teach any of “means for receiving at an e-service various user information that is to be distributed to web site hosts visited by the user, the user information separated into sets each associated

with a given levels of access to user information”, “means for assigning with the e-service a user code to each level of access and therefore each information set”, “means for receiving at the e-service from the user an indication of a level of access that is to be granted to all web sites visited by the user”, “means for receiving at the e-service a user code that has been provided to a web site host by the user”, “means for determining with the e-service a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host:, or “means for transmitting from the e-service to the web site host user information that pertains to the user code received from the web site host”. From the discussions above, it is clear that Rowland, which is treated by the Examiner as comprising all of those limitations, does not actually teach or suggest *any* of the limitations of claim 31. Applicant therefore requests that the rejection be withdrawn as to claim 31 and 32.

(e) Conclusion

In summary, it is Applicant’s position that a *prima facie* for obviousness has not been made against Applicant’s claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that each of these claims is patentable over Rowland/Jones and that the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

B. Rejection of Claim 4

Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowland, as applied to claim 2, in view of Schneier. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As is identified above, Rowland does not teach several aspects of Applicant's claims. In that Schneier does not remedy the deficiencies of the Rowland reference, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 4, which depends from claim 1, is allowable over the Rowland/Schneier combination for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable over Rowland.

C. Rejection of Claim 6

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowland, as applied to claim 1, in view of Henrick, et al. ("Henrick," U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,510). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As is identified above, Rowland does not teach several aspects of Applicant's claims. In that Henrick does not remedy the deficiencies of the Rowland reference, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 6, which depends from claim 1, is allowable over the Rowland/Henrick combination for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable over Rowland.

D. Rejection of Claims 9-11, 13, 20, 21, 29, 30, 33, and 34

Claims 9-11, 13, 20, 21, 29, 30, 33, and 34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rowland in view of Davis, et al. ("Davis," U.S. Pat. No. 6,367,009). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As is identified above, Rowland does not teach various explicit limitations of Applicant's claims. In that Davis does not remedy these deficiencies of the Rowland reference, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9, 11, 13, 20, 21, 29, 30, 33, and 34,

which depend from claims 1, 16, 27, and 31, are allowable over the Rowland/Davis combination for at least the same reasons that claims 1, 16, 27, and 31 are allowable over Rowland.

II. Reply to Examiner's "Response to Arguments"

In regard to claim 1, the Examiner argues that Rowland teaches providing a user code to a web site host when the user visits a web site maintained by the host and cites Figure 6 for support. That figure, however, is merely a chart that cross-references web site name with an access level. Not disclosed in that figure is a "user code" or the process of "providing the user code to the web site host when the user visits a web site maintained by the web site host" as are required by claim 1. As for the Examiner's argument that "provided" does not include transmission of information in its definition, Applicant responds that whether that is true or not is *irrelevant*. What is relevant is that, in Rowland's system, no user code is provided, whether through transmission or other means, to a web site host. Instead, as has been explained multiple times, Rowland teaches a web site providing its name to the user's computer, the user's computer identifying the information to provide to the web site, and the user's computer then providing that information to the web site. Clearly, the web site host is not provided with *any* user code whatsoever.

The Examiner further argues that Rowland teaches receiving from the web site host a request for information concerning the user and the user code that was provided to the web site host. This argument also lacks merit. Again, in the Rowland process, no user code is provided to the web site host. Instead, the web site host provides its name to the

user's computer, and that name is used to regulate what user information will be provided to the web site host. Therefore, there is no reason for the web site host to "request" a user code. As a further note, Figure 7 does not, as is alleged by the Examiner, teach "receiving from the web site host a request for information concerning the user and the user code that was provided to the web site host". See Rowland, Figure 7.

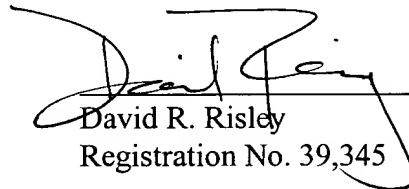
In addition, the Examiner argues that Rowland teaches determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized *from the user code received from the web site host*. Once again, no user code is received from a web site host in Rowland's system. Therefore, Rowland cannot possibly teach "determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized from the user code received from the web site host".

Finally, the Examiner argues that Rowland teaches transmitting user information to the web site host that pertains to the user code. Again, no such user code is provided to a web site host in Rowland's system. Therefore, Rowland cannot possibly teach "transmitting user information to the web site host that pertains to the user code".

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that Applicant's pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,


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